

EDUCATION

Introduction

RTO/ERO is pleased that excellence in education continues to be an important priority of the Provincial Government. As an organization, RTO/ERO recognizes that the quality of life of Canadians as well as our global competitiveness will, in large measure, depend upon the success of our students and, to that end, on the support provided to the province's classrooms and teachers. We have policy statements that support publicly-funded education, active teachers, Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Affiliates. RTO/ERO acknowledges that the Government has put the welfare of students first by initiating a Healthy Schools program and Safe Schools policy.

Healthy Schools

Good food, daily physical activity and a healthy environment that supports learning and growth are vital to helping students reach their full potential and to be life long learners. The Healthy Schools program will help to address child obesity and hopefully, the development of a healthy life style. The partnership with schools, students, teachers, parents/grandparents and others will enable schools to be healthier places for students to learn.

Safety at School and in the Community

The government is to be commended for their belief that safe schools are a prerequisite for student success and academic achievement. Children deserve protection from internet predators, pedophiles and those who would prey with criminal intent on the young and vulnerable. Safety education, anti-bullying programs, closer surveillance and community awareness are all components of necessary programs to protect all children. Also, a significant factor in ensuring safety in schools is adequacy of staffing to allow for appropriate supervision at all times.

Proposed Action Plan

RTO/ERO is encouraged that this Government recognizes the importance of global competitiveness and has initiated several programs to ensure our students are well positioned in the marketplace. Safety in the learning environment and community are necessary components of the total learning environment. A funding formula that supports adequate staffing is a prerequisite for safe schools and RTO/ERO urges the Provincial Government to provide the necessary funds.

Our organization applauds the Community Use of Schools initiative and would welcome partnerships that enhances interaction between Ontario's youth and seniors, that builds strong and caring communities, and that, in the words of Egerton Ryerson, nurtures the capacity in every one of our students to be "a privately happy and publicly useful" member of society.

Questions

1. How is the government evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership between schools, students, teachers, parents/grandparents and others to enable students to develop their full potential as the result of the Healthy Schools program?
2. What other government and community agencies are being used by the government to ensure the safety of students in school and in the community?
3. What specific strategies will your government/party put in place to initiate a partnership to enhance interaction between Ontario's youth and seniors?